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Atari Online News, Etc.
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-* Brit PM: Boycott Bully Sites *-
-* Kim Dotcom's NSA-proof Email Service *-
-* Virus Targets Social Media, New Fraud Twist *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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Another week, another set of issues that has left me in a position of not having the ability to work on some deep insights of some goings-on in the world. So, as has been typical lately, we'll just dive into this week's issue!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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## Xbox One Launch Markets Confirmed

Today we re providing an update to our launch plans for Xbox One. At Xbox, our goal is to provide the best games and entertainment experience possible and the team continues to make great progress on delivering Xbox One.

At E3, we announced that Xbox One would be available in 21 markets around the world at launch. This was an aggressive goal and the team has been working very hard to deliver Xbox One to as many markets as possible.

Our priority is ensuring our customers get the best Xbox One experience the first day it is available. To do that, and in order to meet demand,

we have adjusted the number of markets that will receive Xbox One in November to 13 markets, including Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Spain, United Kingdom, United States and New Zealand, in November.

We remain committed to launching Xbox One in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, as soon as possible in 2014.

While we wish we could launch Xbox One simultaneously in these markets, there are many factors that determine the timing of specific market launches. This includes work to localize the Xbox One dash, incorporate additional voice and languages, and build partnerships to bring apps and meaningful local content to each country.

We understand this will be disappointing news for our fans in the impacted countries, and we are doing everything we can to bring Xbox One to you as soon as possible next year.

If you are in these markets and have questions about your pre-order, please contact the local retailer where you placed your pre-order. To show our appreciation for your patience, if you have already preordered an Xbox One Day One system before today in those countries, you will also receive a pack-in game with your console when it launches.\*

Thank you for your patience we are grateful for your support and remain committed to delivering the best Xbox One experience for your market.

#### The Latest Xbox One Backtrack: Kinect No Longer Required To Play Games

Microsoft may have fumbled the Xbox One launch but the company has done a good job of responding to user feedback ever since. The latest change comes to us courtesy of Xbox One chief platform architect Marc Whitten, who tells IGN that the Xbox One will still function if Kinect isn't plugged in, although you won't be able to use any feature or experience that explicitly uses the sensor. Whitten also said that users can completely turn the sensor off so that it's not collecting any information while you're playing games.

Microsoft had originally planned to require users to have Kinect at least plugged into the Xbox One to use it. But this raised some concerns over user privacy, especially because Microsoft boasted that Kinect can look at microfluctuations in the blood underneath your skin and can zoom into your face to show if you're neutral or smiling.

It also didn't help that Microsoft revealed its original Kinect requirements just before stories about the National Security Agency's extensive surveillance operations started to blow up, so it's probably wise from an optics perspective that Microsoft decided to backtrack on this particular policy.

A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

More Details Emerge on Kim Dotcom's NSA-proof Email Service

With secure email services such as Lavabit closing their doors, the fate of encrypted email may lie with the world's most infamous German-born New Zealand resident. ZDNet reports that Kim Dotcom and his Mega team are working on a new email service that will run on its entirely non-U.S.-based server network and will thus be immune from pressure from the American government to comply with orders from the National Security Agency. However, Mega CEO Vikram Kumar tells ZDNet that the challenges of creating an intuitive email service with end-to-end encryption are more difficult than many might think.

The biggest tech hurdle is providing email functionality that people expect, such as searching emails, that are trivial to provide if emails are stored in plain text (or available in plain text) on the server side, he explains. If all the server can see is encrypted text, as is the case with true end-to-end encryption, then all the functionality has to be built client side. [That's] not quite impossible, but very, very hard. That's why even Silent Circle didn't go there.

Kumar said that solving such a problem will take some more months but vowed that the company would never release a service that didn't include Mega's end-to-end encryption technology.

Virus Targets The Social Network in New Fraud Twist

In the world of cyber fraud, a fake fan on Instagram can be worth five times more than a stolen credit card number.

As social media has become increasingly influential in shaping reputations, hackers have used their computer skills to create and sell false endorsements - such as "likes" and "followers" - that purport to come from users of Facebook, its photo-sharing app Instagram, Twitter, Google's YouTube, LinkedIn and other popular websites.

In the latest twist, a computer virus widely used to steal credit card data, known as Zeus, has been modified to create bogus Instagram "likes" that can be used to generate buzz for a company or individual, according to cyber experts at RSA, the security division of EMC Corp.

These fake "likes" are sold in batches of 1,000 on Internet hacker forums, where cyber criminals also flog credit card numbers and other information stolen from PCs. According to RSA, 1,000 Instagram "followers" can be bought for \$15 and 1,000 Instagram "likes" go for \$30, whereas 1,000 credit card numbers cost as little as \$6.

It may seem odd that fake social media accounts would be worth more than real credit card numbers, but online marketing experts say some people are willing to spend heavily to make a splash on the Internet, seeking buzz for its own sake or for a business purpose, such as making a new

product seem popular.

"People perceive importance on what is trending," said Victor Pan, a senior data analyst with WordStream, which advises companies on online marketing. "It is the bandwagon effect."

Facebook, which has nearly 1.2 billion users, said it is in the process of beefing up security on Instagram, which it bought last year for \$1 billion. Instagram, which has about 130 million active users, will have the same security measures that Facebook uses, said spokesman Michael Kirkland.

He encouraged users to report suspicious activity through links on Facebook sites and apps.

"We work hard to limit spam on our service and prohibit the creation of accounts through unauthorized or automated means," Kirkland said.

The modified Zeus virus is the first piece of malicious software uncovered to date that has been used to post false "likes" on a social network, according to experts who track cyber crime.

Fraudsters most commonly manipulate "likes" using automated software programs.

The modified version of Zeus controls infected computers from a central server, forcing them to post likes for specific users. They could also be given marching orders to engage in other operations or download other types of malicious software, according to RSA.

Cyber criminals have used Zeus to infect hundreds of millions of PCs since the virus first surfaced more than five years ago, according to Don Jackson, a senior security researcher with Dell SecureWorks.

That the virus is now being adapted to target Instagram is a sign of the rising importance of social media in marketing, and the increasing sophistication of hackers trying to profit from the trend.

Online marketing consultant Will Mitchell said he sometimes advises clients to buy bogus social-networking traffic, but only to get an early foothold online.

When asked about the ethics of faking endorsements, Mitchell replied, "It's fine to do for the first 100, but I always advise stopping after that."

He said one of his clients once bought more than 300,000 "likes" on Facebook against his advice, a move that Mitchell felt damaged the client's reputation. "It was just ridiculous," he said. "Everybody knew what they were doing."

Still, experts say schemes to manipulate social networks are unlikely to go away. Creating fake social media accounts can also be used for more nefarious purposes than creating fake "likes," such as identity theft.

"The accounts are always just a means to an end. The criminals are always looking to profit," said computer security expert Chris Grier, a University of California at Berkeley research scientist who spent a year working on a team that investigated fake accounts on Twitter.

## Chrome Password Flaw: How To Protect Yourself

Anyone with access to a computer running the web browser can potentially also access, read and copy any stored passwords within it, be they for email, social media or online retailers.

Just like Safari, Internet Explorer and Firefox, Google's Chrome web browser can store and save passwords for frequently visited websites.

However, unlike its counterparts, the saved list of web logins can be viewed as plain text. Just click on the browser's settings icon, choose "show advanced settings" from the menu, followed by "managed saved passwords." The user's list of passwords will appear, shown as dots. So far, so good. However next to each password is a button which, when clicked shows it as plain text, meaning that anyone with access to the computer can copy and paste them or take a quick screenshot and email it for later use.

This gaping security hole was discovered by developer Elliott Kember, who was so shocked he immediately took to his blog to draw users' and Google's attention to it. "In a world where Google promotes its browser on YouTube, in cinema pre-rolls, and on billboards, the clear audience is not developers. It's the mass market - the users. The overwhelming majority. They don't know it works like this. They don't expect it to be this easy to see their passwords. Every day, millions of normal, every-day users are saving their passwords in Chrome. This is not okay," he wrote.

Since the initial post, he has been stuck in a back and forward argument with the head of Google's Chrome developer team, Justin Schuh, via the Hacker News community board which makes for entertaining reading.

So, if you've been saving web passwords in Chrome, what is the best action to take?

Firstly, if the computer is communal, or if it's an office PC, make sure that password-protected login and logout are enabled so that when you're not using it, it's locked down so that no one else can either.

Secondly, if a site or service you use on a regular basis offers two-factor authentication, enable it. Once activated, as well as entering the password, a second pin code, usually sent to a mobile or smartphone, is also needed for validation. Therefore, if someone has copied down all of your passwords, unless they also steal your phone, they won't be able to access your accounts.

Finally, don't save passwords in browsers, not just Chrome, but any of its competitors for that matter. Consider investing in a free or paid for password management or locker tool, such as last Pass or 1Password. They create totally random, fiendishly difficult to crack and impossible to remember unique logins for all websites but will store them all together in one very secure place behind one master password. When you need to fill in a password, as long as the management tool is open it will automatically populate the field. It not only means that a potentially infinite number of secure logins can be created and stored, you only have to create and remember one password, the one that gives you access to the password management application. For Apple users, the next version of the Mac Operating system, Mavericks, will offer a secure cloud-based password

management and storage feature when it launches in September. Activate it.

### Why Email Security Has Always Been A Problem

Last week, two secure email providers Lavabit and Silent Circle announced the closure of their services, citing pressures on them to reveal user information as the key reason for the decision. The companies offered their own encrypted email services so it's no surprise National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower Edward Snowden was reported to be a Lavabit customer.

While email is a source of unending frustration for many among us, with our inboxes flooded with urgent missives, forced conversations induced by someone hitting Reply-All, and entreaties from princes to share their outrageous fortune, the problems with email have entered a different dimension altogether with the ongoing revelations about the intelligence gathering programs run by the NSA.

Emails are private communications, zealously guarded by those with the most to lose if they were revealed. Securing emails requires securing all the elements involved in conveying them: computer, software, network and storage.

In the early, innocent days of the internet, email servers were open relays: that is, they would forward any email they received, irrespective of the sender, to their intended destination.

This was quickly taken advantage of by spammers, who would flood the network and the users with marketing messages. Even more insidious were address spoofing attacks, in which users were duped financially by emails coming from seemingly trusted sources that were instead sent by scamsters.

Security standards

Large enterprises run dedicated teams to host their email servers. Most small businesses and consumers have gravitated, since the earlier iterations of email, towards web-based email providers such as Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail and Gmail.

These offer the convenience of having an email account operable through a web browser, and commonly secured using a combination of a unique username and a password (and sometimes memorised using Post-It notes).

While this provided a semblance of security, the contents of the email were still transmitted as plain text, making it easy for anybody snooping on the network to read them.

The need for encrypting emails in transit led to the development of Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) by Phil Zimmermann, one of the co-founders of Silent Circle, which used the notion of a public encryption key to scramble messages so that only a receiver possessing a matching private decryption key could unscramble and read them.

But PGP became confined to a niche of the technical and the paranoid due to lack of user-friendliness, and lack of easily available implementations. Most webmail providers soon allowed users the option of

communicating using the HTTP Secure (HTTPS) standard to gain increased security of communications.

Web browsers display sites using HTTPS using a lock icon in the address bar. But HTTPS increases the work to be done by the browser and, therefore, makes emailing a tad slower. It also increases the costs borne by the webmail providers, most of whom offer their services for free.

In 2010, Google adopted HTTPS by default for Gmail to secure user communications in response to attacks on email accounts belonging to Chinese human rights activists. This was soon followed by other providers, as well as by Facebook and Twitter.

But the weakest point in this set-up happens at the point at which the email has to be displayed to the users in a browser or in a particular email program. This requires that the provider has to possess a master key to unscramble the message.

Lavabit and Silent Circle went a bit further than others in this regard by not having a master key instead they stored the users decryption keys in a manner that was inaccessible to even the companies own personnel.

HTTPS is also undermined by so-called man-in-the-middle attacks that have been used by at least one government to spy on its citizens.  
Arm twisting

Recently, there have also been pressures on the most popular webmail providers to provide their master encryption keys to intelligence services as well as the username and password combinations of their users.

This would go above and beyond the metadata currently mined by the NSA programs such as PRISM, since that would expose the actual contents of the emails themselves.

The widespread reach and use of email has meant that, as with any communication medium, it is of interest to authorities. A cat-and-mouse game between the latter and the users will only cause the technology stakes to rise higher and could lead to more intrusive surveillance.

It is important to have a vigorous debate in the public sphere around these programs if we are to safeguard citizens rights while meeting the reasonable needs of security agencies.

Srikumar Venugopal is a Lecturer in Computer Science and Engineering at the University of New South Wales. He does not work for, consult to, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has no relevant affiliations.

#### British PM Urges Boycott of 'Cyberbullying' Websites

British Prime Minister David Cameron on Thursday urged Internet users to boycott certain social networking sites, after a teenage girl who was bullied online committed suicide.

Cameron described the death of 14-year-old Hannah Smith, who hanged herself last week after receiving abuse on the website ask.fm, as



"absolutely tragic". He blasted "vile" websites that allow bullying to take place.

"There's something all of us can do as parents and as users of the Internet and that is not to use some of these vile sites," Cameron told Sky News television.

"Boycott them, don't go there, don't join them."

Ask.fm has described Hannah's suicide as a "true tragedy" and pledged to work with police investigating her death.

It stressed that it encourages users and their parents to report any bullying.

The website, which is popular amongst teenagers, has a question-and-answer format and allows users to post messages without their identity being disclosed.

Hannah's father has called for the website to face murder or manslaughter charges.

Cameron urged website operators to do more to stop them from being used as forums for bullying.

"The people that operate these websites have got to step up to the plate and show some responsibility in the way that they run these websites," he said.

"I'm very keen we look at all the action we can take to try and stop future tragedies like this."

Created in 2010 and based in Latvia, ask.fm has some 13.2 million daily users.

It is the ninth most popular social networking site in the world, according to data released in June by the Internet monitor comScore.

Charities have called for tighter regulation of social networks.

Internet abuse has hit the headlines in Britain in recent weeks after several women, including two lawmakers, received rape and death threats on Twitter.

## The U.K. s Porn Censorship Plan Has All The Makings of A Disaster

The United Kingdom s government has been taking heat for asking British ISPs to implement pornography filters as default settings for their users, who will have to specifically opt out of the filter to get full access to the Internet. Quartz s Leo Mirani passes along two stories showing why any attempts at instituting mass pornography filters will be abject failures that will anger users and that won't even stop the distribution of illegal content such as child pornography.

Citing two separate instances, Mirani notes that the London British Library s filtering system recently blocked one user from accessing Hamlet due to its violent content and also blocked another user from accessing

a series of Tennyson poems, even though the library claims that its filters are only meant to block access to pornographic material or gambling websites. And while it's true that the British Library won't be in charge of instituting a nationwide porn filtering system, Mirani doesn't see how any such system can avoid such snafus no matter who has designed it.

The British Library's filtering system for its public Wi-Fi is like any filtering system: broad, blunt and incapable of nuance, he writes. A public filtering system, designed to cover the entire online population of Great Britain, is unlikely to be much more subtle in its approach.

And given that websites such as The Pirate Bay are already rolling out web browsers that bypass ISP filters, it seems that a nationwide filter wouldn't stop determined individuals from accessing unseemly content anyway.

#### Hackers Seen Unleashing Torrent of Viruses on Holdover Windows XP Users Next Year

Now might be a good time to become accustomed with Windows 8 if you're still a holdover Windows XP user. Computerworld reports that hackers have started storing up any fresh Windows XP exploits they find and are preparing to unleash them on unsuspecting XP users as soon as Microsoft stops supporting the operating system next year. Microsoft security expert Jason Fossen tells Computerworld that hackers who discover new exploits over the next few months may be able to charge twice what they're charging now if they sell them after Windows XP support ends.

This essentially leaves Windows XP users with two options: They can pay Microsoft a high premium to continue supporting XP at their business or they can upgrade to newer platforms such as Windows 7 or Windows 8. More than a third of all desktop computers still use Windows XP so this could potentially be a big problem if users don't understand that they'll have to make some kind of change by next spring.

#### Mark Your Calendars for Windows 8.1!

I know a lot of folks are eager to find out when they will be able to get Windows 8.1. I am excited to share that starting at 12:00am on October 18th in New Zealand (that's 4:00am October 17th in Redmond), Windows 8.1 and Windows RT 8.1 will begin rolling out worldwide as a free update for consumers with Windows 8 or Windows RT devices through the Windows Store. Windows 8.1 will also be available at retail and on new devices starting on October 18th by market. So mark your calendars!

Windows 8.1 continues the vision we began with Windows 8 and is an example of our commitment to continuous innovation and improvement for our customers. And Windows 8.1 brings many improvements in areas like personalization, Internet Explorer 11, search which is powered by Bing, built-in apps including a few new ones, an improved Windows Store experience, and cloud connectivity with SkyDrive (and much more) that people will enjoy. If you haven't already, you can give many of the new features and improvements in Windows 8.1 a try with the Windows 8.1

Preview. Business customers can begin testing Windows 8.1 for deployment in their environments with the Windows 8.1 Enterprise Preview.

Now is a great time to buy a Windows 8 device in a range of different form factors like Microsoft Surface, the Acer Iconia W3, the Lenovo Yoga 11s, the Toshiba KIRABook or the Dell XPS 18 . For students going back to school, we have Windows Chip-in which is a crowdsourcing program to help students and parents purchase a new Windows device for school. And the Windows Store Only at Best Buy store-within-a-store experiences will be launching throughout August and September, just in time for the back-to-school shopping season to check out all the latest Windows devices! If you buy a Windows 8 device today, you can look forward to the new features and improvements from Windows 8.1 in October.

It's very exciting to be delivering Windows 8.1 and Windows 8.1 RT to consumers just before Windows 8 and Windows RT celebrates their 1-year anniversary. You can expect to read more from us on Windows 8.1 leading up to availability on October 18th!

### Windows 8.1 Coming as Free Download

Windows 8 users should circle October 17 on the calendar. On that day at 7 a.m. ET / 4 a.m. PT Microsoft will release Windows 8.1 as a free upgrade or download through the Windows Store. A day later on October 18, the new version of the operating system will also be available at retail stores and on new devices.

"It's very exciting to be delivering Windows 8.1 to consumers just before Windows 8 celebrates its 1-year anniversary," Microsoft's Brandon LeBlanc wrote in a blog post this morning. Microsoft released Windows 8, a radical redesign and vision for Windows, on Oct. 26, 2012.

However, since that release users have pointed out some shortcomings of the operating system, which was designed for tablets, laptops and desktops. Microsoft has said it has directly addressed that feedback in Windows 8.1 with the revival of the Start Button and a host of other new features and improvements.

Microsoft has added the Start Button back to the software, which was removed in Windows 8. Now in the left-hand corner of the traditional Desktop screen there will be a Start tip, as Microsoft calls it. When tapped it will bring you to the Start Screen - the main home of the software, which is full of Microsoft's live tiles and apps. Microsoft has also made it easier to rearrange those tiles on that screen in the updated software.

Improvements have also been made to Internet Explorer 11. The new tabs along the top of the browser will always be visible - no need to swipe down from the top of the screen to see them. A more complete look at the new Windows 8.1 features can be found [here](#).

"We've learned a lot from customers in how they are using the product and have received a lot of feedback," Antoine Leblond, corporate vice president of Windows Program Management, said in a blog post earlier this year. "We've been watching, we've been listening."

## AOL Makes Deep Job Cuts at Local News Group Patch

AOL Inc said on Friday that it would cut a substantial number of jobs at its money-losing Patch local news site business, and a source close to the company said about half of the staff of 1,000 was being laid off.

Job cuts will reduce 10 percent of AOL's workforce, the company said in a regulatory filing late on Friday.

AOL had 5,600 employees at the end of 2012, according to a February regulatory filing.

The company said on Friday that it expects to incur charges of \$14 million-\$18 million this year related to the job cuts.

The company said it would consolidate or close some Patch sites to cut costs and partner with other media companies in some locations. It did not say which media companies it was speaking to or reveal which sites it would be shutting down. It expects to keep most of the traffic to the network of websites.

AOL has been trying to build the company into a media and entertainment destination dependent on advertising since Chief Executive Tim Armstrong took charge in 2009.

One of his biggest bets includes Patch, a group of local websites dotted throughout the United States that has cost the company roughly \$150 million.

Armstrong has met with the AOL board to discuss cost reductions at Patch to reach the goal of turning the unit profitable this year.

Patch has 3.5 million newsletter subscribers and 4.7 million registered users and is growing quickly, the company said.

Earlier this week, Armstrong said he made a mistake in publicly firing an employee on Aug 9.

A recording had been leaked to the media in which Armstrong is heard firing Abel Lenz, a creative director at AOL's Patch unit, after he tells Lenz to put down his camera. Lenz remains fired, the company has said.

## Yahoo Is Getting A New Logo

Internet icon Yahoo is changing its distinctive logo for the first time in nearly two decades.

The question is: To what? And will the exclamation point stay or go?

Each day over the next four weeks the Silicon Valley company is showcasing 30 different logos on its home page. On Sept. 4, one of them will replace Yahoo's distinctive purple Y! logo.

The company has decided on the new logo, but wants to showcase different looks to depict its "renaissance" under its new CEO, Marissa Mayer.

The logo change, the first major modification in Yahoo's 18-year history, will be promoted in a "30 days of change" marketing campaign, company officials told USA TODAY. Yahoo tweaked its logo shortly after it was founded, but decided this time to create a bold, new look.

"The logo is your calling card, identity, manifestation," Chief Marketing Officer Kathy Savitt says.

"The Yahoo logo is iconic; some people love it, some people hate it," Savitt says. "We decided to change it, to reflect new products and depict our next chapter."

Since Mayer took over as CEO a year ago, Yahoo has scooped up more than 20 companies including Tumblr and, last week, Rockmelt and overhauled its existing product lineup, including its home page, Flickr and e-mail.

The charismatic Mayer has also reversed the company's flagging fortunes, with a series of encouraging quarters, an infusion of fresh talent through acquisitions and a 70% bump in its shares. Still, Yahoo faces fierce competition from the likes of Google and Facebook for digital ads.

"We've been talking about changing the logo since September," Savitt says. "The timing is right. It will reflect our brand, which is entertaining, fun, engaging, delightful, playful."

Yahoo tinkered with the look of its logo shortly after the company was founded in 1995, but it has largely remained the same for years. In changing its iconic logo, Yahoo joins Twitter, Microsoft and eBay, which have done the same. In Yahoo's case, it may tweak its typeface, color (purple) and punctuation (exclamation point), but keep the yodel sound the same, Savitt says.

"There is both risk and reward in changing a logo," says Dennis Ryan, chief creative officer at advertising agency Olson, whose clients include Target and General Mills. He recently redid the logo for Belize, for that country's tourism bureau. "Good logos represent every memory consumers have for a particular company."

"Yahoo is, in many ways, the Internet's first icon," Savitt says. "It was the first wave for discovering content on the Web."

Albert Tan, brand director at mobile-security start-up Lookout, which changed its logo this year, says the underlying rationale for change has more to do with where a company is headed. A logo change also requires updates to a company's product line and mission statement, Tan says.

#### Forgotten Spaces: What Will Happen to The Websites We Abandon and Leave To Rot?

This summer the high-design frozen-yogurt shops those cute Chlorox-bright franchises, all zillion of them are flourishing, with maybe just a hint of darkening around the edges, like an August leaf.

But looking ahead, I can't help but ask: What will become of all the Pinkberrys?

This is not to suggest that the current appetite for cold, chemical non-cream consumed in acrylic décor isn't insatiable. Perhaps it is, and all that will survive the apocalypse is styrofoam and 16 Handles.

But if, just if, a small market contraction ever affects the numberless franchises of Pinkberry, Red Mango and Yogurtland that currently enliven American streetscapes if that contraction happens, what will become of the machines, and the fake-Saarinen decor, and the rows and rows of toppings bins wherein now rest tepid kiwi and shards of offbrand Oreos?

They will be trashed. Like Cybex machines at old Curves gyms and CD-listening stations at long-gone Tower Records. As municipalities awaken from froyomania, the shops will be bulldozed, or repurposed, or left to disintegrate in the way of all things. Yogurt to ashes.

And that's fine. Our world is pocked and streaked with the remnants of old zeals overly-optimistic dandelion-asphalt lots, forgotten Fotomats and haunted cineplexes. Making sense or making use, better yet of forgotten spaces has become the preoccupation of many urbanists, landscape architects and designers who have had, in some cases, great success: In Paris, an abandoned railway track was transformed into the Promenade Plantée, an elevated greenbelt now covered in trellises. In Manhattan, a similar elevated greenspace called the High Line opened, running along the path of an obsolete railway.

But all this pertains to actual space. Will there ever be virtual-landscape architects to address incoherent and defunct digital spaces that proliferate like weeds this very minute? I'm talking about the promotional page for the movie Space Jam. Or John Edwards' Presidential campaign site. Or even better: Bob Dole's Presidential campaign site! Those lonely, weedy, isolated spots have been forgotten and left for dead during the breakneck digitization of the past twenty years. Will anything green ever grow there again? Or will they rot, and become increasingly ridiculous and even macabre as time marches on? The homepage of Bob Dole's presidential campaign website from 1996, preserved online.

In his 2010 book *Cognitive Surplus*, Clay Shirky skillfully compared industrialization to digitization. The same year I began to track the way the Web's evolution had come to parallel the evolution of cities. Not long after, Michael Wolff and Chris Anderson wrote a cover story for *Wired* with a similar theme.

But none of us drew the line forward in digital history to the current state of some of our crumbling cities. Reviving their edge spaces; rethinking depots and infrastructure afterthoughts as habitable or arable or worthy of art. The digital world, right now, is too busy building. Later, the nonsensical spaces of the Internet might have to be reconsidered or allowed to slip into malware-infested desuetude. Like gold-rush ghost towns overrun with coyotes.

The Internet, of course, is unlike the City in an important sense: While the limited space of the City is immediately apparent, on the Internet it is not. The Internet is not a zero-sum space: We can build anew without tearing down.

Still, the strangeness of the Web's abandoned landscape abounds. This came vividly to my attention the other day when I spotted a dim screen that flickered meaninglessly last week on the back of the divider in a New

York City taxi. The screen was like a triangle patch of weeds left by a Robert Moses expressway in 1980, or a banged-up, rusted Pinkberry machine in a cineplex basement in 2030.

When the screen is working, it is supposed to show Internet TV to a captive audience. That day, however, it featured an error message seemingly composed without oversight. Application has generated an exception that could not be handled, said the screen, in a Windows-style box.

And then, lyrically: Process ID=0x134 (308), Thread ID=0x270 (624).

But this was only the most central of the symbolic snarls. Along the bottom of the screen was something leftover from a news crawl: Getting back to flat would be JCP victory: Analyst. This news from the financial world was meant to be writ on water, an informational will-o-the-wisp. But imagine that the screen never disappeared: What would our great-great-grandchildren, were this screen to be frozen till they found it, make of the urgency of this news the clever, snarky joining of flat and victory, the letters JCP and that crawl-trademark use of the colon?

Would they ever imagine that the retailer J.C. Penney, itself thoroughly renovated by digitization, and perhaps by then reorganized and renamed and acquired and ingested and shut down, was being observed by people on the Internet who believed that the best it could hope for would be not to lose more money? Or rather, that there were people who had a stake in saying such pointed things, and that these pointed things merited such urgency that they needed to be summarized in a newscrawl for taxi riders?

I had a choice. Click OK to terminate the application. Click CANCEL to debug the application, instructed the Windows box. An error message on the screen in the back of a taxi cab.

OK to terminate. CANCEL to debug. This wasn't human language any more than the spaces under elevated train tracks are human spaces. And yet they're all around us. I read and reread the screen, thought about human, bricks-and-mortar back-to-school shopping at a J.C. Penney in Manchester, NH, in the 1970s.

There's a certain kind of evocative beauty in these marginalized digital spaces: the Space Jam websites, DoleKemp1996.com, someone's old Xanga, LiveJournal, Friendster. You see in them both the absurdity and the possibilities of the present digital moment. For a time, I didn't OK and I didn't CANCEL. I didn't do anything. I asked the driver to pull over so I could pick up a handcrafted pomegranate Pinkberryshake.

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